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Lines on the Yew Tree in Twyford Churchyard

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LINES ON THE YEW TREE IN TWYFORD CHURCHYARD.

HAIL, honour'd tree! that rear'st thy cone
shaped head,
Where calmly sleeping lie the village dead ;
Whose fame's been spoken oft, yet never sung,
My simple muse her tuneful harp hath strung
That she might sound it, with befitting praise,
In these her native, soul inspired lays.
Could'st thou but speak, proud venerable tree,
Oh ! what a chequer'd tale thy life would be !
For thou hast seen young lovers plight their
troth

With all the fervour of impassioned youth,
When earth and happiness appear'd one name,
And union'd bliss the climax of their aim.
Hast seen the timid, fondly trusting maid,
In bridal dress, and innocence arrayed,
Borne blushing by, by him whose manly pride
Swell'd with the thought of calling her his bride.
Or seen the yawning earth ope to inurn
Friend, father, husband, mother in their turn ;
The young wife too, and infant thou hast seen,
Borne slowly to their narrow patch of green
By weeping friends, who, as they mourned
their fate,
Forgot their waking to a better state.

All, all that earth holds dearest, all but thee,
Seem doom'd to perish, hail, yet aged tree.
Is death a coward, that he dares not harm
A thing so proud, so noble in its form ;
Yet sweeps the blooming infant from the earth,
Whom thou hast seen in reckless wanton mirth,
Culling the early daisies, as it played
In childish innocence beneath your shade ?
Grow on, proud tree ! nor think I'd have thee
die—

No ! it would cause my feeling breast to sigh
Were I to lose so old, so dear a friend ;
For earth to me no fitter place can lend
Than thy soft shade, wherein to find repose
From busy life and mind annoying woes.
Grow on, proud tree ! thou form'st a hallow'd
place,

Where I the lot of human life may trace—
May deeply moralise, and quiet weigh,
In silent eve, my actions of the day,
Fill'd with a glowing, deep, and holy love,
Entranced in bliss as pure as found above.

Winchester, March 28th, 1850. C.G.